

## **Research Status and Trends of Bakhtin's Semiotics in China: Visual Analysis Based on CiteSpace**

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### **Abstract**

With the help of CiteSpace visual analysis tool, this paper conducts an empirical study of 1323 Chinese literature on Bakhtin's semiotics from the database of China National Knowledge Network (CNKI). The number of published papers, the co-occurrence of authors, institutions and keywords, and the research frontier are analyzed to review the developing history of Bakhtin's semiotics in China, summarize its research status, point out its problems, and predict its future trend. The results are as follows: 1) The study on Bakhtin's semiotics in China has achieved fruitful results over the past 35 years. Its core research fields include Polyphonic Theory, Dialogue Theory and Carnival Theory; 2) A number of core scholars and institutions have emerged in China, but there is less cooperation between scholars and institutions, and no close academic cooperation network has been formed; 3) The research on Bakhtin's semiotics in China can be roughly divided into four stages, namely Low growth period (1987-1999), Fast growth period (1999-2009), High stable growth period (2009-2015) and High oscillation period (2015-2021). 4) Looking into the future, the localization of cultural semiotics and the construction of Chinese cultural semiotics have always been the direction of efforts of Chinese scholars. Carnival theory and chronotope theory will still be the research frontiers and hot spots in the future.

**Keywords:** Bakhtin's Semiotics, visual analysis, CiteSpace

### **1. Introduction**

Bakhtin's semiotics, as one of the pillars of Cultural Semiotics has exerted extensive and profound influence on the humanistic research of the world, since 1960s. In 1994, David Shepherd, a famous British expert on Bakhtin studies, established the "Bakhtin Centre" (Zhou Qichao & Wang Jiaying, 2014, p. 2) at the University of Sheffield. In 1998, he founded the English journal of Bakhtin studies *Dialogism*, *An International Journal of Bakhtin Studies*, which was discontinued in 2001. The International Bakhtin Annual Conference, since its inception in 1983, has been held every two or three years (biennially for the first 12 sessions and every three years since the 13th). According to statistics, by 2000, there were at least 1,160 articles and works on Bakhtin written in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish (ibid). No wonder, as early as 1986, Gary Saul Morson, a famous American Bakhtin expert, once jokingly called Bakhtin study "The Bakhtin Industry" (ibid, p. 4).

Since the 1980s, Soviet Russian semiotics has aroused the strong attention of Chinese academia. And Bakhtin's thought of Cultural Semiotics was also introduced into China, which had a significant impact on Chinese academics. Throughout the 1980s, Bakhtin research was carried out "in the sound of dialogue surrounding his polyphony theory" (Xiao He, 1998, p.121). Therefore, some scholars summarized this stage as the stage of vigorously introducing of Bakhtin's thought and focusing on polyphonic theory (Xiao He, 1998; Kuang Cunjiu & Peng Ruo, 2021). By the 1990s, Bakhtin's semiotics research in China developed very fast. During this period, the study of Bakhtin began to involve all aspects of his theory. The relevant research achievements are constantly emerging. Zhang Jie wrote the first research work on Bakhtin's polyphonic theory in China, deeply exploring Bakhtin's polyphonic novel theory and its discourse analysis method, which is of "landmark significance" (Wu Kunhu & Kuang Cunjiu, 2019, p. 17). Dong Xiaoyin's wrote the first research monograph on Bakhtin's dialogue theory in China, systematically analyzing and summarizing Bakhtin's achievements in his literary dialogue and "trying to construct a universally applicable literary dialogue theory on the basis of Bakhtin's dialogue" (ibid). The most important achievement of this phase is the translation and publication of *The Complete Work of Bakhtin*<sup>1</sup> (Hebei Education Press, 1998). The book provides comprehensive and reliable data for Chinese scholars, and promotes the study of Bakhtin to a higher level. Another important book that must be mentioned is *Introduction to Theoretical Semiotics* by Li Youzheng, which reviews and summarizes the results and achievements of semiotics over the past decades. In the book, the author put Bakhtin in the chapter of Cultural Semiotics. This is probably the first book in China that classifies Bakhtin's thoughts and theories into the category of Cultural Semiotics. Since the beginning of the new century, Chinese academic circles began to interpret Bakhtin's semiotic thoughts from multiple perspectives. Hu Zhuanglin established the relationship between Bakhtin's semiotics and linguistics by incorporating Bakhtin's semiotic theory into system-functional linguistics and social semiotics. Zhang Jie and Ling Jianhou began to explore the meta-linguistic nature of Bakhtin's semiotics. Zhang Jie made a comparative study of Lotman's and Bakhtin's semiotics, and discussed the similarities between Lotman's theory and Bakhtin's theory, and pointed out Lotman's inheritance and development of Bakhtin's theory. The development of Bakhtin in China over the past decades is summarized by Zhou Qichao (Kuang Cunjiu & Peng Ruo, 2021, p. 37) as "step by step, we have introduced the 'Polyphonic theory' of literary theorist Bakhtin, the 'Dialogue theory' of philosopher Bakhtin, the 'carnival theory' of cultural scientist Bakhtin, and the 'discourse theory' of linguist Bakhtin, and actively expounded and applied them to the interpretation of foreign literary texts. They have also been applied to the interpretation of Chinese literary texts, the construction of literary itself, as well as the reflection of the methodology of aesthetics, philosophy and other humanities disciplines, and has achieved very fruitful results.

Throughout the history of Bakhtin's semiotics research in China, the localization of the theory is the core proposition that runs through it. As Yan Zhijun and Zhang Jie (2013, p. 194) pointed out, "In fact, although our translators and theorists try every means to depict the true nature of Soviet Russia's literary and artistic semiotics, the acceptance of Soviet Russia's literary and artistic semiotics in China does have a process of 'Sinicization', and our 'choice', 'interpretation' and 'application' cannot be objective, but have their own 'Chinese characteristics'". Therefore, the localization of Bakhtin's theory is an inevitable process and has achieved fruitful results. By 2021, more than 1300 Chinese literatures on Bakhtin's semiotics can be found on China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), covering almost all of

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<sup>1</sup> The book edited by Qian Zhongwen consists of seven volumes, the first six of which were published in 1998, and the seventh in 2009 as an expanded edition.

Bakhtin's theories such as Dialogue, Polyphony and Carnival. With the deepening of the study of Bakhtin's theory, Chinese scholars have made their own transformation in methodology.

As for the development of Bakhtin's semiotics in China, scholars of different periods have made review and summary. As early as 1998, Xiao He (1998, p.122-125) roughly divided Chinese Bakhtin study into two stages: the debate stage of polyphonic novel theory in the 1980s and the stage of comprehensive exploration in the 1990s. A recent review was conducted by Kuang Cunjiu and Peng Ruo. They (2021, p.34-35) divided Bakhtin in China into three stages from the perspective of its localization. According to them, the 1980s is the period of focusing on polyphony theory, the 1990s is the period of sorting out translation and expanding research, and the new century is the period of comprehensive attention and multiple interpretation. In the same year, Hu Dan and Wu Xiaofei (2021, p.152-153) divided the spread of Bakhtin's semiotics in China into four stages, namely introductory period (before 1999), development period (1999-2008), Boom period (2008-2013) and the period of flat growth (2013-2020.03). It should be emphasized that this is one of the few papers based on bibliometric analysis of CiteSpace. In the articles, the authors discuss the overall and stage characteristics of Chinese Bakhtin study, tease out the research themes and hot spots in each stage and identify the existing problems. As a result of these review papers, the evolution of Chinese Bakhtin research is clear.

In view of the large number of research achievements of Bakhtin's semiotics in China and wide range of research field, there are likely new phenomenon, changes and trends. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct another review and analysis on the basis of previous studies, so as to reflect the current research status of Bakhtin's semiotics in China accurately and predict the future development direction to better carry out research activities.

This study uses CiteSpace 6.1.R3 visual analysis tool to analyze Chinese literatures on Bakhtin's semiotics. Through the analysis of the research authors, research institutions, key words and research trends of Bakhtin's semiotics in China, this paper shows the development of Bakhtin's semiotics in China, grasp the main direction of Bakhtin's semiotics research in China and provides effective reference for the development of Bakhtin's semiotics in China in the future.

## **2. Data Collection**

The data in this study comes from China National Knowledge Infrastructure (short for CNKI), which is the largest and most authoritative online search platform for academic papers in China. On the advanced search interface of CNKI, The search subject is set to "Bakhtin", and the full text is set to "Semiotics". A total of 1361 journal articles were retrieved. The first paper on Bakhtin's semiotics was published in 1987. After screening and eliminating the invalid papers, a total of 1323 literature data were obtained.

## **3 Research Methods**

Scientific knowledge graph is a kind of image which shows the relationship between the development process and structure of scientific knowledge (Chen Yue, Chen Chaomei, Liu Zeyuan, et al, 2015). As an important research method in scientometrics in recent years, it is often used to explore the characteristics of energy distribution, knowledge evolution, research hot topics, research trends and potential frontier areas of a discipline.

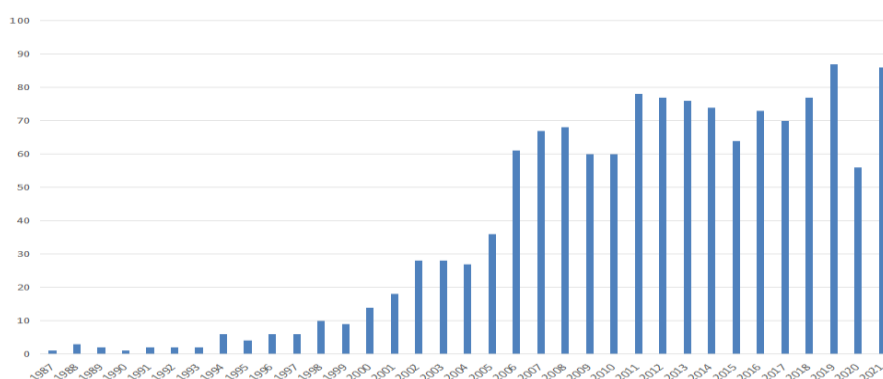
Citespace software, a mapping knowledge domain analysis tool, is developed by Chen Chaomei. It has become one of the most popular knowledge mapping tools in China for providing a good solution for Chinese coding and CNKI data format.

In this paper, Citespace 6.1.R3 software is used to generate Author Cooperation View, Institution Cooperation View, Keyword Co-occurrence View, Keyword Timeline View and other powerful visualization views to explore the study of Bakhtin's semiotics in China.

## 4. Research Results

### 4.1 Analysis of the number of article publication

The time distribution of literature in a field shows the development of the field in a chronological order. It is generally believed that if the literature in a field increases in the time sequence, then the field will continue to receive attention in the time sequence (Li Jie, 2016, p.68). Therefore, it is an essential indicator for us to understand the research status of Bakhtin's semiotics in China by observing the change of the number of papers published from the perspective of macro time sequence. Figure 1 shows the annual number of articles on Bakhtin's semiotics published from 1987 to 2021. The bar shows the measured value of the number of published papers each year and the dotted line is the cumulative value of published quantity. From the figure, the year 1999 is a watershed, before 1999, the annual number of published papers increased slightly, with the highest 10 papers appearing in 1998, after 1999, the number of articles published began to increase rapidly, which indicates that Chinese scholars have devoted much energy to the study of Bakhtin's semiotics. Based on the features presented by the curves in the figure, the study of Bakhtin research has roughly gone through four stages: a slow growth period from 1987 to 1999, a fast growth period from 1999 to 2009, a high stable growth period from 2009 to 2015 and a high oscillation period from 2015 to 2021. Among them, 2004, 2010 and 2016 are stage bottoms. But from the first phase to the fourth phase, the bottom is gradually raising, reflecting that the overall trend of the number of published papers on Bakhtin's semiotics in China.

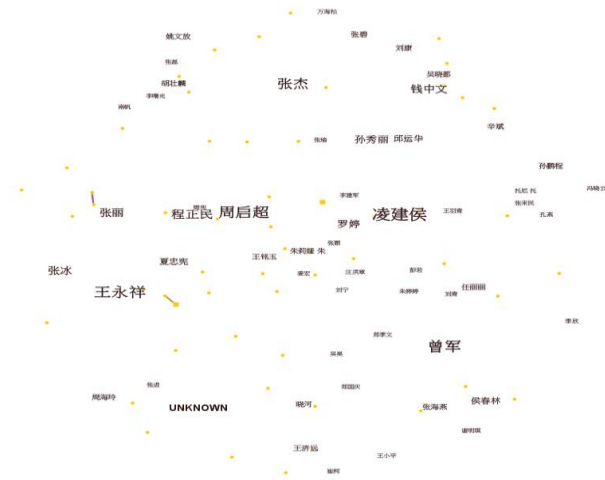


**Figure 1.** Chorological distribution of the published papers on Bakhtin's semiotics

### 4.2 Analysis of author co-occurrence

Generally speaking, author's research interests and directions are fixed (Liu Bengu, 2016, p.202). The acceptability of a research can be judged by analyzing the distribution of authors. The core authors play an indispensable role in the research of a field, so through the analysis of key authors, the research status of the field can be clearly seen. Figure 2 is a co-occurrence map of authors in the field of Bakhtin's semiotics. The number of nodes is 553, the number of connections is 173 and the network density is 0.0011. As can be seen from the figure, Ling Jianhou, Zhou Qichao, Wang Yongxiang, Zeng Jun, Zhang Jie, etc. are marked in large

font, indicating that they have great influence in the field of Bakhtin's semiotics. Based on Price's Law,  $N = 0.749 \sqrt{n_{\max}}$ , the value of N is 3.26, rounded to 3, indicating that the author who has published more than 3 articles is the core author. Thus, there are 28 core authors in the field. The top five authors are those mentioned above, each with more than 10 articles. More details can be found from in Table 1, which lists the number of published papers by top ten core authors.



**Figure 2.** Author co-occurrence in the field of Bakhtin's semiotics in China

In terms of author cooperative network, Figure 2 shows fewer links and a low density (D=0.0011) with most authors distributed in the form of dots, indicating that there is less cooperation among researchers and the academic core team of Bakhtin research has not yet been formed.

**Table 1.** The number of published papers by the core authors in China (Top 10)

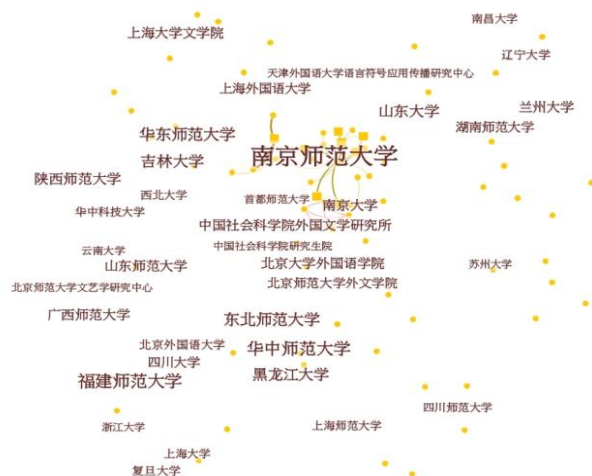
No.	Number of papers	Authors
1	19	Ling Jianhou
2	15	Zhou Qichao
3	15	Wang Yongxiang
4	15	Zeng Jun
5	11	Zhang Jie
6	8	Chen Zhengmin
7	6	Zhang Bing
8	6	Zhang Li
9	6	Qian Zhongwen
10	5	Sun Xiuli
11	5	Luo Ting

**4.3 Analysis of institutional co-occurrence**

Excellent scientific research institutions cannot only cultivate outstanding scientific talents, but also their own research advantages represent the authority in the research field. The openness and overall activity of the institution determine the activity of the discipline (Du Jiahui, 2018, p.46). Figure 3 is the institutional co-occurrence map of Bakhtin's semiotics, with

406 nodes, 222 links and a density of 0.0027. From the figure, Nanjing Normal University, Fujian Normal University, Central China Normal University, Northeast Normal University, East China Normal University, etc. are labeled with big fonts, indicating that they are influential institutions in Bakhtin’s semiotics. According to Price's law,  $N \approx 11.13$ , rounded to 11, indicates that the institution with more than 11 published papers is the core institution in the field. Thus, there are more than 30 core institutions in the field. The top five are the aforementioned large-font institutions, which together account for more than a quarter of all published articles (see Table 2). Table 2 lists the number of published papers by the core institutions of Bakhtin’s semiotics in China.

From the perspective of the inter-institutional cooperation network, it can be seen from Figure 3 that there are fewer inter-institutional connections and a low density ( $D=0.0027$ ). Except for Nanjing Normal University which has many links, most institutions are distributed in dots, indicating less collaboration among research institutions.



**Figure 3.** Institutional co-occurrence in the field of Bakhtin’s semiotics in China

**Table 2.** The number of published papers by the core institutions in China (Top 10)

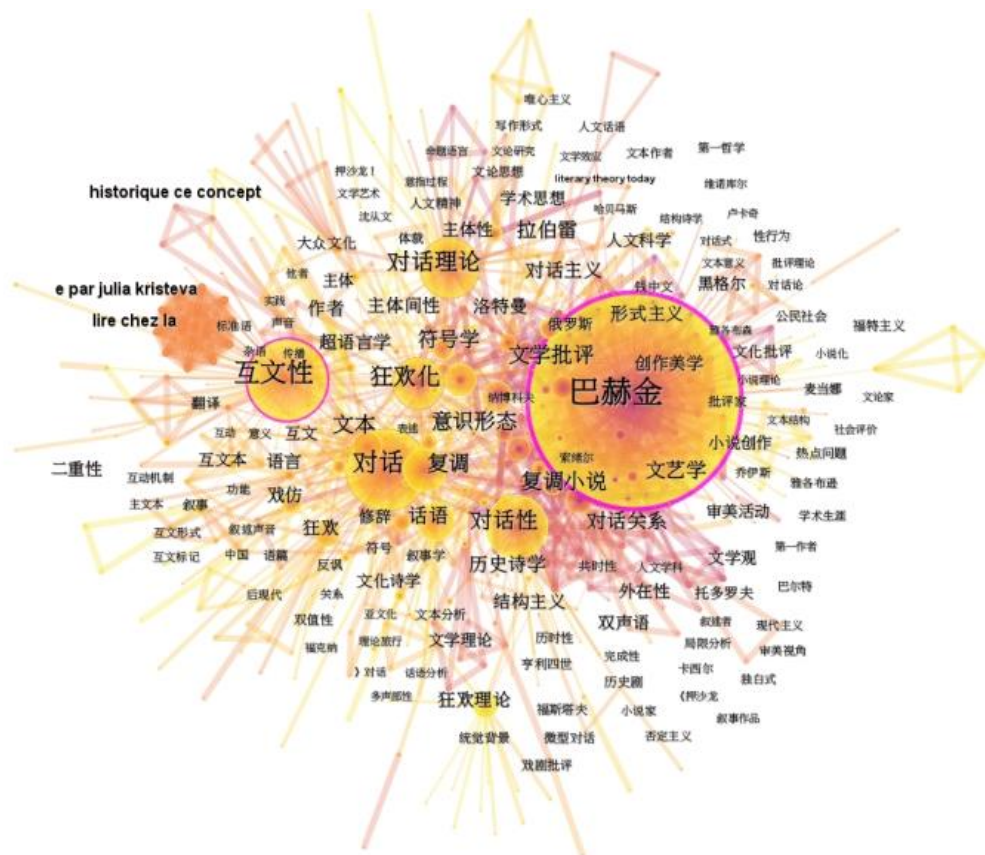
No.	Number of papers	Institutions
1	221	Nanjing Normal University
2	167	Beijing Normal University
3	120	Nanjing University
4	111	Center China Normal University
5	108	Fujian Normal University
6	100	Heilongjiang University
7	96	Huannan Normal University

**Table 2.** (continued)

No.	Number of papers	Institutions
8	94	East China Normal University
9	94	Shandong Normal University
10	83	Zhejiang University
11	80	Sichuan University

**4.4 Analysis of keyword co-occurrence**

Keywords are the overall condensation of the literature content and the high generation of research topics. The high frequency and centrality of keyword occurrence can deeply reflect the hot spots in a certain research field. Figure 4 is a co-occurrence map of keywords in the field of Bakhtin's semiotics with a total of 749 nodes, 1537 links and density of 0.005487. From the node size in the figure, keywords such as intertextuality, dialogue, Dialogue Theory, dialogicality, carnivalization, polyphony<sup>2</sup> are the key nodes with high frequency. The overall density of the links is much lower (density = 0.005487), indicating that the research topics are more dispersed. However, the connections between the key nodes are very close, reflecting the closeness of some of the key topics. Table 3 and Table 4 show more details.



**Figure 4.** Keyword co-occurrence in the field of Bakhtin semiotics in China

Table 3 shows the frequency of keywords co-occurrence in the field of Bakhtin's semiotics in China, the keywords, intertextuality (117), dialogue (107), Dialogue Theory (73), dialogicality (63), carnivalization (55), polyphony (42), etc. have high co-occurrence frequency, indicating that they are the core research hotspots of Bakhtin's semiotics in the past 35 years. In terms of keyword co-occurrence time, carnivalization (1995) comes first, followed by Dialogue Theory (1996), dialogicality, polyphony (1997), dialogue, discourse (1999), text, intertextuality (2001), carnival (2005) and Carnival Theory (2008). The three keywords dialogue, dialogicality and Dialogue Theory, all refer to the topic of dialogue. The sequence of their appearance in the map indicates that the study of Bakhtin's semiotics in China has been deepening from dialogue to dialogue theory and then to dialogue relations. The same to the keywords carnivalization, carnival and Carnival Theory.

<sup>2</sup> The object of this study is Bakhtin, so the keyword Bakhtin has no statistical or research significance and should be removed from the keyword groups, similarly below.

**Table 3.** *The frequency of keywords co-occurrence of Bakhtin's semiotics in China in descending order (Top 10)*

No.	Count	Year	Keywords
1	117	2001	Intertextuality
2	107	1999	Dialogue
3	73	1996	Dialogue Theory
4	63	1997	Dialogicality
5	55	1995	Carnivalization
6	42	1997	Polyphony
7	41	1999	Discourse
8	33	2008	Carnival Theory
9	31	1997	Semiotics
10	31	2001	text
11	31	2005	Carnival

Table 4 shows keywords with high centrality. As can be seen from the table, only intertextuality (0.21), dialogue (0.16), carnivalization (0.11) and Dialogue Theory (0.10) with centrality greater than 0.1, indicating that they are the hub nodes connecting other small nodes in the network.

**Table 4.** *The centrality of keywords co-occurrence of Bakhtin's semiotics in China in descending order (Top 10)*

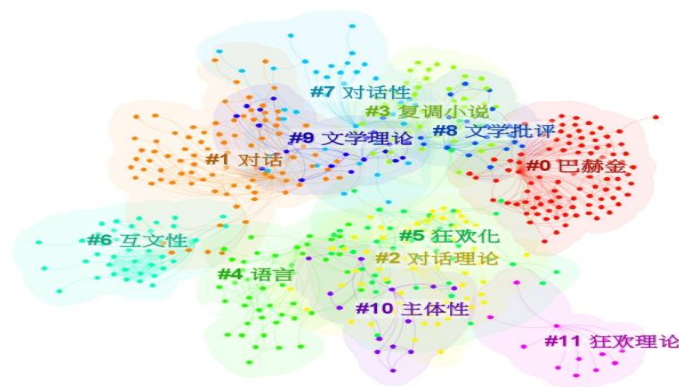
No.	Centrality	Keywords
1	0.21	Intertextuality
2	0.16	Dialogue
3	0.11	Carnivalization
4	0.10	Dialogue Theory
5	0.09	Dialogicality
6	0.06	Polyphony
<b>Table 4. (continued)</b>		
No.	Centrality	Keywords
7	0.06	Ideology
8	0.05	Discourse
9	0.04	Carnival Theory
10	0.04	Text
11	0.04	Carnival
12	0.04	Semiotics

#### 4.5 Distribution of research hot spots

Figure 5 is a keyword clustering map of Bakhtin's semiotics. The Modularity Q is 0.6692, and the Silhouette is 0.8797, indicating that the clustering structure is reasonable, efficient and convincing, But S value approaching "1" also indicates that the core research topic tends to be single.

From the figure, Citespace software produces 12 larger clusters, namely #0 Bakhtin, #1 dialogue, #2 Dialogue Theory, #3 polyphonic novel, #4 language, #5 carnivalization, #6 intertextuality, #7 dialogicality, #8 literary criticism, #9 Literary Theory, #10 subjectivity and #11 Carnival Theory. The clustering results are shown in Table 5.





**Figure 5.** Keyword clustering map of Bakhtin's semiotics in China

**Table 5.** A clustering list of keywords of Bakhtin's semiotics in China

Cluster Number	Representative Keywords
#0	Russian formalism, Marxism, theoretical innovation, sociological criticism, dialogism, Confucianism, Theory of <u>Culturology</u>
#1	Hyperlinguistics, discourse dialogism, text theory, Freudian Theory, ideology, text analysis, relationship of dialogue, Structuralism, Christieva, Theory of Intertextuality
#2	Dialogue Theory, Mirror Image Theory, self construction, novel space, academic thought, Russian formalism, Jakobson, Vinokur, structure- function
#3	polyphonic novels, polyphonicity, human spirit, relationship of dialogue, narrative grammar, academic thought
#4	interaction mechanism, the text world, cognitive mechanism, ideology, subject in process, Analytic semiotics
#5	Ideology, the literary effect, idealism, form of writing, Marxism, literary criticism, Formalism, Dostoyevsky, "Shanzhai" or copycat dram, Marxist criticism
#6	Christieva, Analytic semiotics, multiculturalism, humanism, Henry Louis Gates, J. M. Coetzee, Language selection, opposing voices, ethical orientation, aesthetic effect
#7	Nabokov, On Defens, The Original of Laura, Vladimir Nabokov, Cultural Semiotics, Modernist literature, literary map, Faulkner novels, William Carlos Williams
#8	literary criticism, structuralism, Jakobson, Modernism, Structuralist linguistics, the poetics of Dostoyevsky, critical theory, social and economic environment, Marxist theory of literature and art, Sociology of vulgarity
#9	Historical poetics, Theoretical travel, Veselovsky, Contemporary China, Humanities study, literary theory, Dostoyevsky's poetics, Research current situation, Literary noumenon, Polyphonic novels
#10	Carnival culture, Upper culture, Dialogue ideas, The Renaissance, Dialogue between cultures, Theory of literature and art, Philosophical thought, Philosophy of communication, Folk humor culture
#11	Carnival Theory, The Divine Comedy, Network subculture, Carnival quality, showman, loser, "diaosi"; or loser Culture

According to the content and characteristics of the clusters, the research on Bakhtin's semiotics in China can be divided into three categories. The first category is the Introduction of Soviet and Russian Semiotics, which includes most articles in #0. The second category is the study of Bakhtin's theories, among which the Dialogue and Polyphonic novel theory involves #1, #2, #3, #7; The Carnival Theory involves #5 and #11; Intertextuality involves #6 and #10; literary criticism involves #8 and #9; Text involves #4. The third category is about applied research, which involves in #2, #3, #4, #6, #7, #11, #12.

1) Introduction of Soviet and Russian Semiotics. The papers in this category mainly focus on the introduction of Bakhtin and his thoughts and theories, such as *A Study of Bakhtin's Thoughts* by Xia Zhongxian, *Toward Bakhtin's Semiotic Kingdom* by Hu Zhuanglin. Among them, *On the Channel of "Structure-Function" Exploration--Infiltration of Russian Formalism in Contemporary Soviet Literary and Art Theory Circles* by Zhou Qichao systematically reviews the development of Russian Formalism in the Soviet Union, and the critical acceptance of Bakhtin, Lotman and Kozhlyv to the infiltration of literary and artistic thoughts of the Formalist school. The major citing article of the cluster is: *Bakhtin and Social Semiotics* by Hu Zhuanglin, which aims to discuss the profound influence of Bakhtin's thoughts on modern linguistic theories.

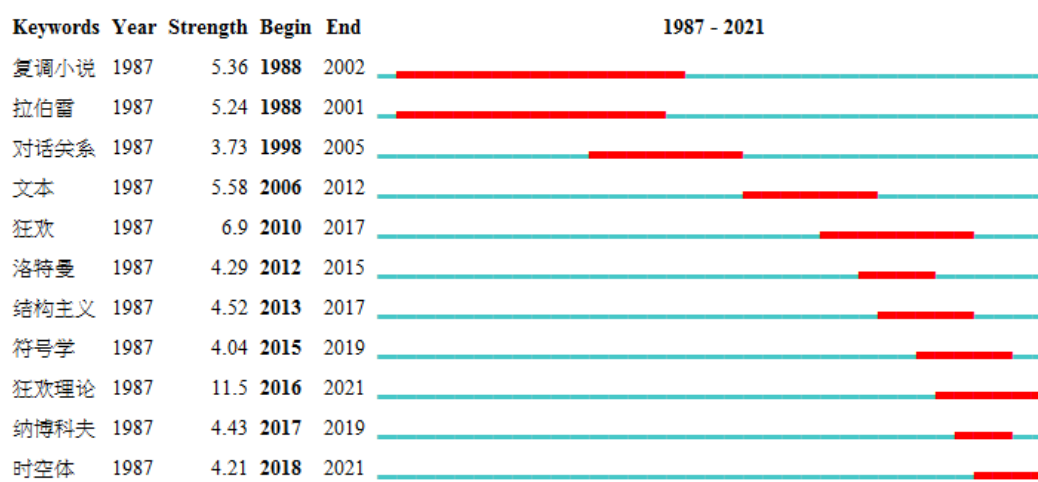
2) The study of Bakhtin's theories. The papers in this category mainly focus on the study of Bakhtin's theories or some theories related to Bakhtin's theory. For example, *Theory of Intertextuality* by Xue-wen Dong and Ke Cui; *the Travel of Text Concept and the Generation of Its Core Elements* by Mei Qibo. Guan Zhi-bin's doctoral dissertation *A Study of intertextual forms of A Text* explores the interaction mechanism of discourse, the language markers and manifestations of discourse intertextuality in Modern Chinese. *A Study of David Lodge's Literary Criticism and Todorov as a Literary Critic: from Structuralism to Dialogue Criticism*, which both discuss the connection between structuralism and literary criticism. *Bakhtin's Thought of Dialogue and Cross-cultural Studies* by Zhengmin Chen in 2016, which combed Bakhtin's thoughts on cultural dialogicality (integrity and diversity of culture, cultural subjectivity, cultural interactivity, cultural marginality and openness, cultural innovation), the research methodology on the humanities and culture thoughts, etc., and by using bakhtin's rich dialogic thought resources to carry out dialogue cross-cultural research. Dong Xiaoyin's monograph *Climbing the Tower of Babylon Again--Bakhtin and the Theory of Dialogue* systematically analyzes and summarizes the results of Bakhtin's theory of literary dialogue.

3) The applied research. The papers in this category mainly focus on the application of Bakhtin's theories. For example, Wenyong Guo's master thesis *On Polyphonic Art Theory of Shi Tiesheng's Novels* discusses the polyphonic nature of the protagonists in Shi Tiesheng's novels; Yilin Chen's master thesis *Analysis of News Reports' Effects on Ideology by Bakhtin's Dialogue Theory--A Comparative Study of English and Chinese News Reports on Diaoyu Issue* attempts to analyze not-literary texts--news text--by using Bakhtin's Dialogue Theory. the master's thesis *The Research of Memes in the Contemplation of Carnival Theory* by Wei Wang in 2017, which, takes network emoji as the research object, traces back the development of network memes from the perspective of Carnival Theory, analyzes the carnival characteristics reflected in the spread of the memes, and discusses the problems under the carnival phenomenon of emoji. However, there are new phenomena of applying Dialogue Theory to teaching research, such as *On Dialogue in Chinese Teaching and Research on Information Based English Teaching Models in Higher Vocational Schools based on Dialogue Theory*. In addition, Dialogue Theory has also appeared for film research, such as master thesis *A Study on the Dialogue Film from the Perspective of Bakhtin's Dialogue Theory* by Yao Jingting.

#### 4.6 Analysis of keyword burst

Research frontier refers to the emergent heat of a certain research topic at a time node within a period of time, which represents the dynamic nature of academic research. When the value of the independent variable changes in a short period of time, it will inevitably cause the sudden change of the dependent variable. CiteSpace regards this mutation information as a means to measure deeper changes, that is, to predict frontier hot spots by detecting the burst of keywords. The embedded algorithm function of "Find Burst Phrases" will identify the professional term with a rapid increase in frequency (i.e., burst word) as the research frontier term (Zhao Dancun, 2012, p.56).

#### Top 11 Keywords with the Strongest Citation Bursts



**Figure 6.** The burst of keywords in the research field of Bakhtin's semiotics

As can be seen from Figure 6, the burst events can be divided into stages by the beginning year in which the research hotspots burst. the first stage is from 1988 to 2010. In this stage, the duration of each research hotspot is long, "polyphonic novel", "Rabelais" and "dialogue relations" have lasted for more than ten years. From the perspective of the research topic, research content is concentrated on literature. The second stage is from 2010 to 2018. In this stage, the duration of each hotspot is relatively short. The longest time span is only five years, occurring in 2016. The shortening of the time interval indicates that the research hotspots changes quickly.

In terms of strength, "Carnival Theory" has a strongest burst with the strength of 11.5. "Carnival" come in second with the strength of 6.9. Since they belong to the same category, the strength value is 18.4 if combined together, which is far more than other keywords. The second is Chronotope, although the strength value is only 4.21, it is still in constant change.

Based on the above analysis, It can be judged that "Carnival Theory" and "Chronotope" have become the current hotspots and will be the focus of scholars' attention in the future.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1 Summary

At present, most of the researches on Bakhtin's semiotics in China adopt qualitative analysis. In this paper, bibliometric method is used for quantitative research. With the help of CiteSpace software, this study analyzes 1323 Chinese literature on Bakhtin's semiotics from

CNKI database by author co-occurrence map, institutional co-occurrence map, keyword co-occurrence map, keyword clustering map and keyword burst map. The results shows:

Firstly, although Bakhtin's semiotics appeared in Soviet Union in the 1960s, it was not until 1980s that it entered China and has had profound influence on Chinese academia. From the distribution of the number of published articles, It has experienced the period of slow and steady growth from 1987 to 1999, the period of rapid growth from 1999 to 2009, the period of high and steady growth from 2009 to 2015, and the period of high fluctuation from 2015 to 2021.

Secondly, From author and cooperative network, 28 authors, including Ling Jianhou, Zhou Qichao, Wang Yongxiang, Zeng Jun, Zhang Jie, etc are the core researchers, occupying a central position in the research field of Bakhtin's semiotics. As for author's cooperation, the research on Bakhtin's semiotics in China is characterized by small concentration and large dispersion, and lack of close research teams. Researchers have few academic contacts, low academic recognition among each other, and have not yet formed a broad academic consensus, which is still in the stage of independent research.

Thirdly, From the perspective of the research institution, The research institutions of Bakhtin's semiotics in China are almost all colleges and universities. There are more than 30 core institutions, among which Nanjing Normal University, Fujian Normal University, Central China Normal University, Northeast Normal University, East China Normal University have great influence. From the perspective of cooperation network, except Nanjing Normal University, there is no extensive and close academic cooperation network. Nanjing Normal University has a close cooperative relationship with more than ten universities at home and abroad, including Tianjin Foreign Studies University, the School of Foreign Languages of Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications, the Department of Foreign Languages of China Pharmaceutical University, Wen Tian College of Hohai University, Zhou Youguan Language and Culture Institute of Changzhou University, Taizhou College of Nanjing Normal University, Changshu Institute of Technology, Jinling Women's College of Nanjing Normal University, The School of Foreign Languages of Shi Jiazhuang University, etc. In addition, the University has established a relationship with the Department of Semiotics of the University of Tartu in Estonia. At the same time, as a member of International Association for Semiotic Studies (IASS), the university actively participates in the international academic exchanges of semiotics.

Finally, from the research contents and hotspots, the research theme and research hotspot of Bakhtin's semiotics change greatly every year. According to the diachronic trend of hot spots and the changes in the number of published papers, the study of Bakhtin's semiotics in China can be divided into four stages:

1) Low growth period (1987-1999). It is the early development stage of TMS semiotics research. A small number of papers are published every year. The research topics and hotspots mainly focus on Dialogue theory, Polyphonic fiction, dialogue relations, Rabelais, etc. This stage of research focuses on three areas, namely, the introduction to Bakhtin's life, Bakhtin's view of literature and Bakhtin's semiotic thought and theory. Although the number of articles published at this stage is not much, it provides a preliminary understanding of Bakhtin himself, his semiotic thought and theory.

2) Fast growth period (1999-2009). The number of literature in this stage has increased rapidly. In addition to the old hot spots, there are new hot spots related to intertextuality,

carnival and ideology. The research scope of this stage focuses on the field of literature, the study and interpretation of Bakhtin's literary theories. At the same time, translation studies appeared. Although some research results have been achieved in this stage, it is still in the preliminary process of teasing out and discussing on the whole, and the value of Bakhtin's theory has not been fully understood and explored.

3) High stable growth period (2009-2015). The number of publications remained high and stable. Research hotspots began to diversify and permeate from literature to linguistics, at the same time, the discussion on "meta-linguistics" appeared. From the perspective of research scope, the exploration of theories remained the focus of research, but applied research emerged. There are also comparative studies between Lotman and Bakhtin.

4) High oscillation period (2015-2021). The number of publications remains high and oscillating. The articles with theoretical applications have increased dramatically. Bakhtin's dialogue theory and carnival theory have been fully explored. Bakhtin's theory continued to penetrate into linguistics, culture, even education studies.

### **5.2 Future trend**

The purpose of reviewing and summarizing the 35-year development of Bakhtin's semiotics in China is to better predict its future research trend. From the perspective of research frontier, Bakhtin semiotics has produced 11 keywords with high strength value. These keywords are not only hot spots in Bakhtin's semiotics, but also the research frontiers. Among these frontier hotspots, carnival theory and Chronotope will be likely to be the hot spot in the future.

From the research direction, the localization of foreign theories is still an important research object of Chinese scholars. There are two meanings in this. The first refers to the Sinicization of theories to adapt to the Chinese environment; the second refers to the construction of local theories inspired and influenced by foreign theories. For the former, Chinese scholars have been working hard, and for the latter, there is a successful example, namely Gong Pengcheng's Introduction to Cultural Semiotics. The author systematically introduces Cultural Semiotics with Chinese characteristics on the basis of western semiotics theory. It is believed that more scholars will devote themselves to the localization of Bakhtin's theory in order to build the theoretical basis of Chinese cultural semiotics..

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